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SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: BUDGET CUTS DELAY MOUNTAIN WARFARE
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

REF: A. 08 LJUBLJANA 564
[1](#)B. LJUBLJANA 212

Budget Cuts Hit Center of Excellence Project

[1](#)1. (SBU) Representatives from Slovenia's Mountain Warfare School (MWS) and Ministry of Defense officials confirmed to ODC Chief in mid-July that Slovenia was no longer asking the U.S. to be a supporting nation for its proposed NATO MWS Center of Excellence (COE) in 2009. They explained that Slovenia's timetable for the MWS to become a NATO-accredited COE in 2009 (ref A) had been delayed due to budget constraints (ref B). The Slovene Chief of Defense (CHOD) had sent a letter in the spring to several countries, including the U.S., Germany, France, Italy, Romania, Croatia, and Austria, soliciting support for the COE on a NATO or multilateral basis. The response from our Joint Chiefs of Staff was similar to that from the other countries: interest but also hesitation to commit resources since Slovenia was still developing plans for what that support would mean.

Next Steps

[1](#)2. (SBU) In light of the delay, ODC Chief discussed with MWS representatives the possibility of instructor exchanges with the U.S. Army Mountain Warfare School in Vermont and a bilateral memorandum of understanding to provide training opportunities for U.S. forces preparing for deployment to Afghanistan. The joint training and exercise in June with a Colorado National Guard unit, a Slovene unit, and U.S. MWS and Slovene MWS instructors working together exemplified the benefits of bilateral cooperation using Slovenia's MWS. The Colorado soldiers learned valuable mountain warfare skills and both sides praised the exercise as providing experience in joint operations as NATO allies. The MWS officers also floated the prospect of a mountain warfare conference in summer 2010 that would include representatives from the various mountain schools in NATO and neighboring countries. Slovenia intends to make the MWS a Multilateral COE in 2010 that would facilitate its transition to a NATO COE as budget resources allow.

Comment

[1](#)3. (SBU) Post continues to advocate for U.S. cooperation with Slovenia's MWS. As the June exercise demonstrated, leveraging Slovenia's niche capabilities for predeployment training is a win-win for both sides. Adding a top-off mountain warfare course at Slovenia's MWS following existing

predeployment training at the Joint Multinational Training Command in Germany could add value for U.S. units heading to Afghanistan. We hope that when Slovenia's budget allows for the formal process on COE accreditation to resume, we can step up and offer U.S. support as a sponsoring nation.

FREDEN